

Beakall. Tuesday.

Jan: 9th 1832.

My dear Madam,

How many thanks I have to return for your kind presents just received. the dear little bulbs are all safe: and the Hydrangea looks exceedingly blue after his long journey. I have called a small Geological Meeting on the subject of the Soil: and after having spent the Subject myself, the earth was felt, tasted; and looked at thro' Spectacles, Microscopes &c. but without coming to a happy conclusion: next Week we are to meet again, & have called in a Land-Surveyor. . I myself am inclined to think it is Porphyritic - old primitive Stratum: and that the flowers before the Noachic Deluge were all blue. . As you did not say what was to be done with the little Guernsey Wooms; I have put them by themselves in a box, till they can learn our Dialect.

Shake White's Selborne is getting you swiftly through the Winter. The village in which he lived, would make any one a Naturalist: the most wild, and romantic that I ever saw in the South of England: fine downs, (the very Common Ground of the great Range of South Downs) at his back; and Woodme Forest, part of the ~~long~~ ^{long} forest that stretched from Christchurch in Hants, into Sarrey, on his left.

He was a quick, solitary kind of a Person: with not very good spirits: he used to go out with his gun after breakfast, & creep about the ledges, for scarce birds: once a month in the year, he would come to Town to dine out, and talk. You will see that he believed in the torpidity of Snow-birds - I doubt the last naturalists who will adhere to such an opinion. Nature is seldom uniform in her operations. . . a few straggling birds, weak, or wounded, or accidentally belated remain; scapthor in the fine sunny winter days, and thousands of cold: but the general instinct is to move off. . . I once saw a lady carried half way up Mount Blane in a Sedan Chair: and if you visit Selborne, it must be in the same way: should you meet with an accident, you must enquire for the Huggins's Wife, who is a very good sort of Woman, and like Dyer's Aunt, is famous for her Jams.

I have just finished Wilson's American Ornithology. a delightful work, introducing me to all the Songsters, and tenants of the Transatlantic forests. every thing was seen, killed, drawn, & described by himself. a Poulterer could not have done it better. His description of the Pigeon-flocks is absolutely sublime. and his account of a battle that he witnessed (Wars of the Giants) between a large Humble-Bee, and a Humming bird, is worth every other fight from Homer, down words. The Bee had retreat at last, losing his Honey-bag, and an Hour's good daylight.

I left Collier, when he parted last, sitting in the Park at the Adelphi, looking at Brittonia: has he got back? . . . Poor dear soul! he is a good.

Creation. He shook me by the hands, in his affectionate manner;
"Don't forget, says he, don't forget your theological studies." I felt it.
The Place in which it was said. - The Scene - the Manner - the tipping and
orange into my hands at the same time. . . all was impressive. I heard him
say in a low voice to Mrs. Lobbie - 'I could wish him not to lose sight of
the Concordance, for he is not very strong in Divinity.' Feeling the
justice of his advice, I am beginning a course of Theology: and as I mean
it to last for the next 20 years, I have commenced as high up as I could,
and am at present (for I wish all to be practical) in the question. 'Whether
the world was made out of any thing, or nothing.' the question stands thus.

- Either every thing was made by something out of nothing; or else
nothing made every thing either out of some thing or nothing: and
Infinite Power might as reasonably be supposed to create every thing
out of nothing; as no Power at all could be supposed to make
every thing out of any thing: and lastly, granting that nothing can be
made out of nothing, then infinite power is equal to no Power at all." You

In this state I am, unable to decide for the superiority of any one argument, when
all are equally certain: Hence the Subjects that follow, will be less perplexing;
and Mrs. Lobbie did not mean to involve me in such intricate metaphysics,

though I feel their moral tendency: and
believe, that had not Gates crossed out.

'Michael, my boy. Michael' which took
off his attention, he would have entered more
fully into this interesting Subject.

Believe me
My dear Madam
yours with great respect.
J. Milford.

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JAN 10 1832
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11 JAN 11
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Mrs. Collier

No 9. Perceval Street
Northampton Square
London.

